

Training Needs for Fire Service Leaders, Managers and Supervisors

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Abstract

Shrinking government budgets, increased demand for tax dollars and a changing workforce have underlined the need for effective fire service managers and leaders. Have fire service leaders received sufficient training to meet the task? The purpose of this research was to determine what type of supervisory, management and leadership skills were believed necessary to increase the effectiveness of the leaders of organizations and to determine how the training received by the Fresno-Kings Ranger Unit management staff compared with the recommendations and to determine a importance rating of 18 training topics. An evaluative research method was used. The research questions addressed by this projects were: What leadership, management and/or supervisory techniques, skills and traits did the literature describe as being important to successful leaders? What type of management, leadership and/or supervisory training have the leaders of Fresno-Kings Ranger Unit received? Was the training they received timely? Do they use the principles taught in the training? How did the training these supervisors and managers believe is important compare to what is taught in the Executive Leadership course? The literature was reviewed, targeting both fire and emergency service authors and private industry leaders. Additionally, each member the Fresno-Kings Ranger Unit management staff completed a questionnaire which summarized the training they had received, the timing and usefulness of their training, and asked them to rate the importance of 18 training topics, including most of the topics presented in the Executive Leadership course. Most of the Ranger Unit's management staff had

been trained in only a few of the skills noted in the literature, had received insufficient supervisory training prior to becoming a supervisor and believed most of their training had been received late.

The top three tiers of management for the Ranger Unit generally gave high ratings to those topics covered in Executive Leadership, however the battalion chiefs tended to rate topics related to direct supervision higher than the topics offered in Executive Leadership. It was recommended that more management, leadership and supervisory classes be delivered sooner in the employees' careers and that the array of topics taught in the Executive Leadership course be considered for inclusion in the in-house training curriculum.



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Training Needs for Fire Service Leaders, Managers and Supervisors

Introduction

As government budgets shrink, demands for tax dollars increase, costs of doing business rise, and work forces change, the need for effective managers, leaders and supervisors for the fire services becomes even more critical. Have the leaders of the fire service received sufficient training to meet the task?

This research project had a three-fold purpose. First, it was to determine what type of supervisory, management and leadership training and techniques the literature described as necessary to increase the effectiveness of leaders of organizations. Second, it was to evaluate what type of management, supervision and/or leadership training the management staff of the Fresno-Kings Ranger Unit had received. Third, it was to determine how the management staff rated 18 training topics in regards to importance for their current and future jobs. An evaluative research method was used. The literature was reviewed to determine which traits and/or techniques were found to be important to effective leadership, management and supervision. Additionally, a questionnaire was completed by all the management staff of the Fresno-Kings Ranger Unit. The questionnaire asked the recipients to describe the supervision, management and/or leadership courses they have received, if they used the information they learned, if they received the information in a timely manner and which topics they believed were important for their current and future assignments.

The questions this research project addressed are as follows:

1. What leadership, management and/or supervisory techniques, skills and traits did the literature describe as being important to successful leaders?
2. What type of management, leadership and/or supervisory training have the leaders of Fresno-Kings Ranger Unit received?
3. Was the management, leadership and supervisory training they received timely?
4. Do they use the principles taught in the training?
5. How did the training these supervisors and managers believe is important compare to what is taught in the Executive Leadership course?

Background and Significance

The literature abounded with references to and articles about ways to effectively manage, lead, coach, supervise, build a team, etc. The articles recorded the success stories and either cost savings or profits generated as a result of utilizing various management and leadership techniques. They talked about industries which were turned around by their leader's use of one or many successful management and/or leadership techniques and traits. Occasionally, the articles described the failures to employ such techniques and the cost of these failures.

Parallels can be drawn from the private industry to the fire service and the need for fire service leaders who possess successful leadership and management techniques, skills and traits.

In today's world of privatization, high dollar discrimination and harassment settlements, and tight government dollars, effective leadership, management and supervision is especially critical. As in the private industry, effective leadership and management can make the difference in whether the fire department meets the local mandates for public service and maintains a sufficient budget to accomplish its goals and objectives. Effective supervision can make the difference in whether the personnel are motivated and productive.

Fresno-Kings Ranger Unit is one of 21 administrative units of the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection. In addition to providing all risk protection for the non-federal wildlands within Fresno County, the Ranger Unit contracts with Fresno County Fire Protection District to provide first responder services and fire protection to many of the small non-incorporated farming communities and rural areas within Fresno County. The Ranger Unit protects an area of more than two million acres, employs approximately 220 people and has an annual budget of nearly 13 million dollars.

The management staff of the Ranger Unit includes twelve battalion chiefs, three division chiefs, one deputy chief and one unit chief. These people are responsible to manage the day-to-day operations of the ranger unit to ensure that the tasks, responsibilities, goals and objectives of the organization are being met. They also supervise, either directly or in a secondary capacity, all the employees of the unit. The relative success or failure of the Ranger Unit lies with them and depends on their ability to effectively lead, manage and supervise the employees of the Ranger Unit. This project determined what training they have received and how it compares with

literature recommendations.

The Executive Leadership course included several subjects which related to leadership and management, including the development of management and leadership techniques and skills. Additionally, many of the techniques, skills and case studies covered in Executive Leadership could be used to develop the participant's supervisory effectiveness. These case studies served to help the participant understand the importance of utilizing the various techniques addressed. This research paper also determined the importance rating the management team in Fresno-Kings Ranger Unit placed on 18 management, leadership and supervisory training topics, including the topics covered in the Executive Leadership course.

Literature Review

The literature was reviewed to find what skills leaders, managers and supervisors needed to have or needed to develop. Some of the authors believed good management skills could be taught, while others espoused the most important traits of managers must come from within.

Factors which have forced major corporations to race to keep ahead include globalization, newfangled alliances and technological developments. The corporation's ability to anticipate changes so they were a part of the change and not a consequence, was acute (Greco, 1997). In his article "The human side of management", Thomas Teal stated good management works miracles. However, he also noted that studies of large corporations have shown one of the

biggest barriers to change, innovation and new ideas was often the management. Mr. Teal further stated he believed mediocre management was the norm because capable management was so extraordinarily difficult that few people look good no matter how hard they tried. Mr. Teal indicated one reason for the scarcity of managerial greatness was the way managers were educated and trained. He believed too much focus has been placed on technical proficiency and too little on character. Traits like courage, tenacity and integrity could not really be taught. Because management is such a supremely human activity, character means more to employees than education (Teal, 1996). John Browne, head of British Petroleum Company, believed learning was key to a company's ability to adapt to a rapidly changing environment, to be able to identify opportunities others might not have seen and to exploit those opportunities (1997). JoAnn Greco agreed and noted a corporate executive's ability to learn has become the heart of the corporation's ability to compete (1997). When John Browne espoused that all companies face a common challenge, i.e. of using knowledge more effectively than their competitors do, he was not referring only to the knowledge residing in one's own organization (1997). The downsizing of the 1980's necessitated teaching executives how to do more with less and quality initiatives emphasized continuous learning (Greco, 1997).

United States corporations have spent an estimated \$55 billion annually to train employees. For many of these corporations, the emphasis on "training" officers, general managers and division directors was intricately bound up with the notion that education should promote executives' working vigorously together to realize corporate strategy (Greco, 1997).

People learn in a variety of ways. They can learn from their own experience, from the example or instruction of others who work in similar business and from the example of others who work in other businesses (Browne, 1997). Another method of learning found in the literature was action learning. Action learning places real case studies and real strategy problems specific to the business as the center of the class presentations. It was a relatively new techniques and was an outgrowth of the management trends of the mid-1980's (Greco, 1997).

An additional value for employees involved in corporate training was found to be what the employees learned from getting together with peers within their own organizations (Greco, 1997). No matter how the knowledge was derived, the key to reaping a big return was to leverage that knowledge by replicating it throughout the company. This way, each unit was not learning in isolation and reinventing the wheel over and over again (Browne, 1997).

Ms. Greco found a company's executive education was clearly a function of who was at the helm. For instance, Kodak's CEO George Fisher changed that company's traditional passive learning program to an executive action learning regime which concentrated on modeling as opposed to looking back (Greco, 1997). Kodak's new goal was to develop a "learning agenda" for those few who drive the strategic direction of their company and focus on subjects that will directly affect their executive's capability as a group to lead the company. Their learning agenda required Kodak to look at business strategies for the company in the three to five year range and try to determine what their executives need to know now to get where Kodak wants to be (Greco, 1997).

Literature citations indicated leaders need to be comfortable with change. Mr. Browne believed it was necessary for leaders to realize an organization would stay ahead competitively only if they acknowledged that no advantage and no success was ever permanent (1997). Mr. Bruegman stated leadership was comprised of several elements, including understanding the continual need for change and supporting the change. A hallmark of successful leadership has been an understanding that a department needs continual revitalizing if it is to remain successful and aware (1994).

Business leaders also must be able to view patterns as if they were on a balcony and not get swept up in the field of action (Heifetz and Laurie, 1997). Leaders must be able to identify struggles over values and power, recognize patterns of work avoidance and watch for the many other functional and dysfunctional reactions to change (Heifetz and Laurie, 1997).

Today's manager in business wanted to be seen as a sponsor and facilitator, one who has empowered their people (Willson, et.al., 1995). This has caused some conflicts. Too often, people looked up the chain of command and expected senior management to meet market challenges for which they themselves were responsible. Getting people to assume greater responsibility was often found to be difficult because many lower level employees were most comfortable being told what to do and managers were accustomed to treating subordinates like machinery requiring control. Letting people take the initiative in defining and solving problems required management to learn to support rather than control and workers to learn to take responsibility (Heifetz and Laurie, 1997).

In the area of providing technical services such as responses to hazardous materials incidents, performance management was a must. Performance management was really a cluster of skills required to handle the human side of supervision. These skills included communication skills, team building, leadership styles and increasing employee involvement (Halas, 1993).

Researchers found performance was significantly better in departments where management encouraged the employees to share ideas for improvement with people in other disciplines, who involved everyone who would be affected by a decision in making that decision, and encouraged employees to help others do their work even if it caused their own productivity to suffer (Majchrzak and Wang, 1996).

Coaching was another skill important to leaders, managers and supervisors cited in the literature. Helping to change the behaviors that threaten to derail a valued manager or employee through coaching was often the best way to help the employee succeed. Coaching required understanding someone's problem behavior in context, deciding whether the problem could be remedied and encouraging the person to adapt. An effective coach knew what questions to ask and drew on a wide variety of techniques to help a manager or employee change problem behavior (Waldroop, Butler, 1996).

The typical behaviors of a successful senior executive included being very competitive and quick to think, judge, act and speak. Because of their business time constraints, business executives also tended not to have or take the time to develop relationships with their subordinates. An effective coach, on the other hand, must adopt a very different mean; one of a

teacher or helpful colleague and not of a competitor or judge. Instead of focusing on the immediate task, the coach must focus on the long term (Waldroop and Butler, 1996). As a result, many executives were found to be reluctant to coach because coaching could take a lot of time, and the results were not guaranteed. Additionally, many executives expressed fear of overstepping personal boundaries, playing the role of a psychiatrist or assuming too much responsibility. However, good coaching was simply good management and embodied the same goal, i.e. to make the most of an organization's valuable resources (Waldroop, Butler, 1996).

Several other authors believed human interaction and development of relationships were important aspects of leaders, managers and supervisors. Mr. Browne believed effective leaders developed personal relationships and involved themselves in continual conversations about competitive dynamics, performance and corporate values (1997). Mr. Stein believed all supervisors had the responsibility to stay technically current and to be proficient at interpersonal skills. A supervisor must have the ability to deal with the human element of the external and internal customer. A competent supervisor reduced work stress and helped create a fun work environment (Stein, 1997). Mr. Teal stated that the only people who became great managers were those who understood in their guts that managing was not merely a series of mechanical tasks but a set of human interactions (1996).

The literature indicated leaders must observe and understand human interaction and its potential impacts. To identify what was really going on, a leader must observe the dynamics between subordinates and those around them. Because behavior has never taken place in a

vacuum, an important part of the assessment was how a problem behavior impacts the other members of the organization. It was important to keep track of effective behaviors as well as ineffective behaviors (Waldroop, Butler, 1996).

The literature abounded with references to a leader's, manager's and supervisor's need to motivate employees. For instance, Mintzberg described three types of management styles. First, there was the boss style of management where the manager knew and controlled everything personally. Then, there was the currently popular professional style in which whoever knew management could manage anything and do so by remote control, by reading performance reports and empowering their subordinates. Finally, Mr. Mintzberg's desired management style which he called the craft style of managing. It was about inspiring, not empowering and was based on mutual respect. A craft manager became involved deeply enough to know when not to get involved (1996).

Mr. Stein noted every supervisor had the responsibility to build the morale and motivation of the organizational team (1997). One of management's most important jobs was to motivate. Inspiring a flawed but valuable player to accomplish something as difficult as a significant behavioral change constituted one mark of a fine executive. In effect, the manager was resurrecting a valuable human resource that the organization might have otherwise lost (Waldroop, Butler, 1996). Leaders were often asked to motivate their people toward a common goal, objective or action. To be an effective motivator, a leader must recognize the needs of their people and the physiological makeup the people. Once a leader understood the needs of their

people, they needed to try to match the needs of individual with the needs of the organization.

When this was accomplished, a win-win situation occurs (Mozingo, 1997).

Strategies undertaken by local governments to cope under increasingly difficult financial constraints were found likely to have little impact and could easily backfire unless employees assigned to execute the strategies were motivated. As a result, motivational techniques were found to be a local government's best strategy for coping with hard times (Bjornlund, Gregory and Zahiruddin, 1995). Motivation of emergency services personnel was found to be an essential aspect of management. However, the authors believed the traditional motivation of responders was no longer the norm and should now include modern management techniques for personal motivation (Searing and Bramblette, 1994).

Ms. Bjornlund, Mr. Gorden and Mr. Zahiruddin reported that Psychologist Abraham Maslow and Douglas McGregor espoused the notion that employees have complex needs. When given the opportunity, employees have and will perceive work as part of their personal fulfillment. They were motivated by a sense of accomplishment, rather than by a fear of reproach for failing to accomplish the job (Bjornlund, *et.al.*, 1995). It was imperative emergency services leaders recognized individuals had complex social and psychological needs and an individual set of goals and objectives. These individual goals and objectives may or may not lie within the boundaries of the goals and objectives of the organization. Through knowledge of modern management theory and technique, a leader could motivate their organization's members to achieve both the individual and organizational goals and objectives (Searing and Bramblette,

1994).

Another important aspect of management cited by the literature was the need for managers and leaders to understand decision making processes. The classic model of decision making, called the analytical process, was described as a rational and systematic process of analysis based on the concurrent comparison of multiple options. Most firefighting strategy and tactics training programs have taught analytical decision-making to determine the appropriate action on the fireground. However, in studying command decision-making, Dr. Gary Klein determined fire incident commanders employed the analytical approach to decision making only 10% of the time, while they used the intuitive approach 90% of the time. When using the intuitive process, the decision maker based their choice of action not on the analysis of multiple options, but the recognition of the critical situation, its similarities to other emergencies the decision maker had experienced, and what worked in those similar situations. His studies showed that the greater the experience of the decision maker, the greater was the frequency they used the intuitive approach (Hartin, 1998)

The literature indicated leaders must understand their organization's culture. Additionally, the literature noted it was the CEO's job to set the corporate culture and then to live in that culture (Adler, 1997). Many managers have overlooked the importance of changing their organization's culture after a restructuring exercise. They failed to see that collective responsibility was an attitude, a value, and a concern. People who felt collectively responsible were willing to work especially hard to avoid letting the team down (Majchrzak and Wang, 1996).

British Petroleum Company has changed from an unfocused mediocre performer to the most profitable of major oil companies. Its organizational culture has changed from a multitude of baronies to a system of teams and informal networks in which people shared knowledge. The change in organization began with David Simon who became CEO in 1992 (Browne, 1997). The researchers found if companies were not ready to take the steps necessary to change their culture, they might be better off leaving their functional departments intact (Majchrzak and Wang, 1996).

Because in many organizations, teams have become an integral part of managing, the ability to work with and lead teams was frequently noted to be an important skill for supervisors, managers and leaders. By the mid-1980's, American companies were using the team approach to management extensively and were experimenting with group incentives for higher productivity. The manager's role was becoming one of a corporate culture builder and coordinator of work teams rather than one of director (Lanier, 1992). Mr. Dick believed most of the business of management could be conducted by small, object-oriented teams comprised of people who spent their time in the field (Dick, 1990).

In well managed enterprises, performance was central to team efforts. Real teams followed a well-defined discipline in order to achieve their performance potential. The closer a team was to its marketplace, the easier it was to maintain that critical focus on performance. Customers and competitors energized a team's natural instincts more than any other source. Therefore, the higher on the leadership ladder and more distant from the customer, the easier it was to lose sight

of the elements necessary to a team. Good leadership required differentiating between team and non-team opportunities and then acting accordingly (Katzenbach, 1997).

For instance, the typical behavior pattern in the top leadership of all kinds of enterprises is frequently comprised of some kind of executive council. The council's primary purpose was to shape strategic priorities enforce operating standards, establish corporate policy and develop management talent. During scheduled meetings, only modest amounts of time were available for unscheduled subjects. The top management group tended to operate more as a working group with a single leader than a team (Katzenbach, 1997).

The ability to communicate effectively is frequently cited as an essential trait of good managers, leaders and supervisors (Stein, 1997). Organizational goals must have been clearly and accurately communicated to all employees in order to enable them to adjust their behavior to meet the goals. However, communications also must flow in both directions (Searing, 1994). In fact, to be a good communicator, one must understand the team's or employee's perceptions. Active listening was cited as an effective method to improve one's understanding of their team's perceptions (Stein, 1997).

Keeping employees informed was found to be as important as making them feel welcome to participate (Dick, 1990). Team-building required the supervisor to communicate well with his/her team. A leader must effectively communicate their expectations and the expectations of the organization. Additionally, a leader must be able to communicate the organization's mission, goals and objectives in a manner which allowed their subordinates to understand how they fit into

the organization. Mr. Stein has found that fire service professionals are usually poor communicators (Stein, 1997).

According to the literature, the ability to embrace change and understand a changing culture will become even more necessary for leaders, managers and supervisors of the future. The traditional World War I method of teaching civilians to be emergency service workers has been found to not be the best way to train the fire force twenty-somethings. Changing demographics and economics have changed the complexion of the firefighting workforce in the 1990's in a dramatic way. Their core values are significantly different than those of the baby boomers, who came before them. Leaders must understand what made the twenty-somethings who they are before they can effectively train them (Ward, 1994).

Procedures

A literature review was accomplished to determine what characteristics, techniques and traits were considered important to effective management, leadership and supervision. A mix of fire service and industry periodicals were reviewed. An attempt was made to find a variety of topics instead of several articles which emphasized the same technique, skill or trait. A summary of the information derived from the literature is contained in the Literature Review section.

A questionnaire, shown in Appendix A, was developed to determine which management, leadership and/or supervisory classes the management staff of Fresno-Kings Ranger had received and how frequently they used the principles learned in these classes. The questionnaire also asked if the information was received in a timely manner, and if they had received sufficient training to do a good job of supervision. Finally, the questionnaire asked the individuals to rate 18 listed topics on the relative value to their current job and in preparation for their next promotional level. Most of the topics presented in the Executive Leadership course at the National Fire Academy were included in this 18 topic list. Most of the remaining topics listed were taught in CDF's Supervision 4 level course.

The questionnaire was given to all the management staff of Fresno-Kings Ranger Unit. This included ten battalion chiefs, three division chiefs, one deputy chief and the unit chief. (Two Battalion Chief positions were vacant at the time the questionnaire was distributed.) No names were asked for on the questionnaires, however the classification of the person answering the questionnaire was identified. All participants received a questionnaire and with one exception, all

participants completed the questionnaire. One participant completed most of the questionnaire except a portion of question 14, and none of questions 15 and 16. Because no names were placed on the questionnaire, the reason the one questionnaire was not completed could not be determined.

The individual responses to the questionnaire were compiled, tallied and recorded. In an effort to evaluate the relative value of each of the topics listed in questions 14 and 16, a numeric value was assigned to each of the descriptive value ratings. “Critical” was assigned a value of 3. “Important” was assigned a value of 2. “Nice to have” was assigned a value of 1. “Unnecessary” and “No response” were assigned values of 0. The values were multiplied by the number of responses to derive a total which was used to indicate the overall level of importance applied to each topic by the respondents. Finally, the total was divided by 15 (the number of respondents) to determine the average value given to the topic by all respondents. The summary charts of the results are found in Appendix B.

A synopsis of the topics covered in the supervision classes presented by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection was acquired for a better understanding of the topics on which the employees had received training. CDF’s academy combined the “old” supervision and management classes into the four supervision courses currently being taught at the CDF academy. Old Supervision A is now Supervision 1 and Supervision 2. Old Supervision B is now Supervision 3 and Supervision 4. The expansion from two courses to four courses was to allow incorporation of the management series. The listing of the topics covered in the four supervision

courses is contained in Appendix C.

The literature search was limited to the resources found in the Resource Library at the National Fire Academy and the intranet library available through Ernst & Young LLP. Because the research population included 100% of the management staff employed at the Fresno-Kings Ranger Unit at the time of the study, the study results are accurate for that group. Additionally, the study results could provide an insight into the likely status of similarly situated personnel from the other 20 Ranger Units within the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, but the study would not necessarily be accurate as it would represent less than a 5% sample of such a group. Accuracy of the study would be further diminished, possibly to the point of not being indicative of other fire organizations within California, because of the uniqueness of the CDF mission and the demographics of its employees, i.e. rural-focused) as compared with fire departments for more urban communities.

Because the responses to the relative value of importance of the 18 topics listed in questions 14 and 16 varied greatly, not only by rank of the respondents but also by the individuals within the ranks, broad sweeping generalizations about the topics were not possible to develop. However, some patterns did develop which are discussed in the Results section.

Results

The literature indicated several skills, characteristics and traits believed necessary to help managers, leaders and supervisors do a good job. Included in the list were:

- Need to be comfortable with change
- Must learn to support instead of control (empowerment)
- Identifying patterns
- Coaching skills
- Human relations/human interaction
- Employee motivation
- Understanding the decision making process
- Organizational culture
- Use of teams and work groups
- Setting strategic priorities
- Effective communication skills
- Performance management

As a group, the Fresno-Kings Ranger Unit study group had received the training in the following subjects:

- Various management courses including personnel management, time management
organizational management, project management, management development and the
management of change

- Various courses in the CDF supervision series and other supervision courses, including supervising difficult people
- Adverse Action
- Human Psychology
- Affirmative Action/Sexual Harassment/Equal Employment Opportunity
- Various leadership courses including field leadership and various Incident Command System (ICS) courses
- Verbal Judo
- Motivation training
- Team building
- National Fire Academy's Executive Development and Executive Leadership courses

Individually, all employees had taken at least some of CDF's management development/supervision course series. Some employees had taken only one or two courses in addition to the management development/supervisor series, and other employees had taken a much larger array of courses. Individually, the Unit Chief was among the employees who had received the least amount of training on management, leadership and/or supervision topics. The Deputy Chief and two of the Division Chiefs had received the most training. One of the Division Chief's training was comprised primarily of classes received at the National Fire Academy in the Executive Fire Officer's series.

The Deputy Chief, one of the Division Chiefs and four of the Battalion Chiefs believed they

received their training at the time in their careers when they needed it. The Unit Chief, one Division Chief and six Battalion Chiefs believed they had received the training late, but it had been of some use to them. One of the Division Chiefs believed he had received the training too late to be of any use to him.

With one exception, the test group indicated they used the training they received either on a frequent or occasional basis, depending on the course and the employee. The only course listed as being seldom used was one about supervising difficult people. One Battalion Chief respondent indicated he seldom used the information provided in this course. The other Battalion Chiefs and the Division Chiefs who took a similar course indicated they used the information occasionally or frequently. The classes which tended to be consistently used on a frequent basis included the affirmative action/sexual harassment/equal employment opportunity courses, adverse action courses and the ICS Section Chief courses. Additionally, employees tended to frequently use the material presented in the courses they took on their own time and at their own expense.

The importance ratings placed on the topics by the test group varied by rank of the respondent and frequently by the individual within the rank. The topic rated most important by the respondents for their current position and next promotional level was “Successful Communication Techniques”. The second most important topic for the respondents current positions was a tie between “Motivating People” and “Disciplining and Criticizing Constructively”

The second most important topic identified for the respondents next promotional level was “Strategic Thinking and Planning”.

“Fostering Creativity and Innovation” received the lowest overall ratings by the majority of respondents for both their current positions and for their next promotional level. For their current positions, this topic was tied with “Understanding and Managing Change” for the lowest score. “The Art of Evaluating” was the second lowest rated topic by the respondents for their next promotional level.

As a group, the Battalion Chiefs tended to rate topics more directly tied to supervision higher than topics more closely identified with management and leadership such as those topics presented in the Executive Leadership course. The Division Chiefs tended to rate the Executive Leadership topics higher than the Battalion Chiefs, however, they also rated several of the supervision topics high. The Unit Chief and Deputy Chiefs tended to rate the supervision topics lower than the Executive Leadership topics. As described in the previous paragraph, three of the topics presented in the Executive Leadership course received the lowest overall ratings for either the respondents current position or their next promotional level.

Discussion

As a group, the management staff of the Fresno-Kings Ranger Unit had received training in the areas described by the literature to be important to becoming a good manager, leader and/or supervisor. Individually, with minor exceptions, the management staff had not received a good cross section of training discussed by the literature to be essential to good management and/or

supervision. The amount and variety of training received varied significantly from person to person. Longevity or rank was not an indicator of the amount of training any individual had received. Only the individual who had attended the National Fire Academy's Executive Fire Officer classes had received a similar array of training topics to those described by the literature as being important. No one from the study group felt they had received sufficient training prior to becoming a supervisor. Only six of the fifteen people in the study group believed they had received their training in a timely manner.

CDF offers a series of four supervision classes for its employees. The topics covered in these classes fall far shy of those the literature considered necessary for managers, leaders and/or supervisors. Therefore, employees who want to increase their training in management, leadership and supervision must look outside of CDF for training. Few of the people in the study group had taken outside classes on their own time and using their own resources.

There are several possible interpretations of these circumstances. One is that CDF employees did not or could not anticipate what training would be necessary to be comfortable with the task of supervision. Another is that CDF employees believed CDF would provide the necessary training for them if CDF feels it was important for them to be trained. Both statements probably have some merit.

The study group's highest rated training topic was "Successful Communication Techniques". The literature also ranked this skill as very important. The literature indicated that the ability to motivate employees was also an extremely important trait of a manager, leader and/or supervisor

and is especially important in the public sector. The study group also chose “Motivating People” as one of the most important training topics from the selection of 18 topics. However, few employees had received any communication skills or employee motivational training.

The study group placed “Understanding and Managing Change” of only moderate importance in their current jobs and ranked it as one of the least important for their next promotional level. This is contrary to the importance the literature placed on a manager’s and leader’s ability to deal with change. CDF, like most other fire departments in the United States has faced and is facing significant changes in the way it does business and the business it is expected to do. However, the relatively low rating the managers in Fresno-Kings Ranger Unit placed on “Understanding and Managing Change” indicates they are slow to recognize the necessity of change and the need to take an active part in the change. This information seems to be consistent with Mr. Teal’s statement that studies have shown management to be one of the biggest barriers to change.

The literature reveals the great importance of adequately trained managers to an organization of adequately trained managers. This study reveals the significantly inadequate training received by the managers of the Fresno-Kings Ranger Unit. At best, because the management personnel are insufficiently trained, they will likely not reach their full potential as leaders, managers and supervisors. This could be very costly to the Ranger Unit and to CDF in decreased productivity, wavering management direction, diminished community cooperation, and through an infinite number of lost opportunities and unexplored avenues that may not even be realized or

understood.

Generally, the Unit Chief, Deputy Chief and Division Chiefs tended to believe the array of topics delivered in the Executive Leadership course were generally more important than the Battalion Chiefs did. This difference diminished when the Battalion Chiefs listed the topics they believed would be most important in their next promotional level. The Battalion Chiefs tended to find the courses more closely associated with direct supervision more important than the topics associated with the Executive Leadership course. (The summary of results for each question can be found in Appendix B.)

This is relatively consistent with the tasks each classification is expected to do (see the organizational charts and the duty statements for each classification in Appendix D). Generally, in Fresno-Kings Ranger Unit, the battalion chiefs tend to make sure the day to day tasks are accomplished by the field staff. The division chiefs administer the various programs and move these programs toward the organizational goals and mission while coordinating with local cooperators. The deputy chief coordinates all these functions within the ranger unit. The unit chief oversees the melding of the ranger unit's programs with the community, other organizations and the rest of CDF.

With some exceptions, the management staff's most highly rated topics seemed to correlate relatively well with those recommended by the literature as important skills. One of the exceptions was "Understanding and Managing Change". Because of the relatively good correlation, the summary tables which rated the topics could be used as a basis to review the

topics presented in CDF's current Supervision course series and to recommend potential topic changes to address training deficiencies.

The study also revealed only a few of the management staff sought to improve their training on their own. As an organization, this would imply that the management staff would be most receptive to management, leadership and/or supervisory training supplied or underwritten by CDF.

Recommendations

CDF should provide employees with more management, leadership and supervisory training than is currently provided. Additional training necessary to be a good supervisor should be available to employees prior to the time they become supervisors. Management, leadership and supervisory training should be provided to employees earlier in their careers. Prior to establishing the preferred training topic list, a thorough analysis of the literature along with a questionnaire similar to that used in this project should be employed to develop a topic list for the training. For instance, according to this research, the literature and the questionnaire results agree that topics especially lacking include communication skills and employee motivational skills. Both in-house and out-sourced training opportunities should be considered.

Currently, CDF's Supervisory training has target classifications for those who should receive each course. Additional training should also be targeted at specific classifications, beginning with

entry level permanent employees. To ensure personnel are given the opportunity to take recommended classes, CDF should formalize a process of projecting leadership, management, and supervisory educational needs and allocating a budget toward these needs. To do this, CDF should establish a standard of the minimum training hours per classification of leadership, management, and supervisory training individuals should receive and incorporate them into the annual education plan to ensure well rounded training. Because of the costs of poor leadership, management and supervision, CDF should establish a budget for this type of training.

The literature and questionnaire results both indicate that topics similar to those covered in the Executive Leadership course should be provided to unit chiefs, deputy chiefs and division chiefs and to battalion chiefs who are planning to promote.

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